Bibliographical Society of Canada

Facsimile Series No. 3

The

Red River Expedition

by J. C. Major

[Winnipeg, 1870]

Publication 7

Toronto, Canada

1953

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RED RIVER EXPEDITION

Bibliographical Society of Canada Publications.

Reprint Series:

No. 1. Thoughts on the Education of Youth, by Richard Cockrel. Neward, Tiffany, 1795. 1949.

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No. 3. Sawney's Letters, by James Anderson. Barkerville, on Williams Creek, B.C., Cariboo Sentinel, 1868. 1950.

No. 4. The Manuscript Book of Oliver Goldsmith. England, 1825, and Canadian Review and Magazine at Montreal, 1826. 1950.

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No. 1. Aux Citoyens et Habitants des Villes et des Campagnes de la Province de Québec. Québec, Brown, 1785. 1951.

No. 2. The Union of Taste and Science, by Stephen Dickson. Québec, Neilson, 1799. 1952.

No. 3. The Red River Expedition, by J. C. Major. Winnipeg, Laurie, 1870. 1953.

[Note: This facsimile replaces the reprint of An Old Woman's Story, by Lizzie Rowe, previously announced.]

To appear soon:

No. 4. Cree Syllabic Hymn Book, by James Evans. Norway House, 1841.

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Major's pamphlet is of interest to the literary historian as the first literary effort to be published in the Prairie Provinces.[3]

The date of publication of *The Red River Expedition* can be fixed as not earlier than September 13, the date on which the first issue of Laurie's *Manitoba News-Letter* appeared. The author had written most of his verse en route to Red River. In the conclusion, the corrected line suggests haste in composition. In all likelihood, Major had his poem published while the hardships and *camaraderie* of the journey were fresh in mind. The volume may have been intended as a souvenir to give or sell to fellow members of the expedition.

Of the writer nothing is known other than that he was a member of Cook's company of the Ontario Rifles. Whether he returned to eastern Canada with the unit in the spring of 1871, or chose to settle in Manitoba as did many of the militia, has not been ascertained. In his poem Major expresses his intention of seeking his fortune in the prairie province.

The printer, Patrick Gammie Laurie, is a colourful figure in the printing history of the Canadian prairies, and had a number of other printing "firsts" to his credit. Laurie arrived in the autumn of 1869 at the Red River Settlement, where he became involved in the factional struggle.

Laurie and an American printer, G. B. Winship, published Manitoba's first broadside, Governor McDougall's proclamation, on December 2. The surreptitious printing of this document is a story probably unrivalled in Canadian printing.[4] The printing shop of the *Nor'-Wester*, where Winship had worked, was being used as a guard room by some of Riel's men. Under the pretext of tidying up the shop, Winship in two or three visits walked off with sufficient type secreted in his clothing to print the proclamation. It took an afternoon and most of a night for the conspirators to print 300 copies by the "planer process".

Laurie later fled the colony with a price on his head. He returned with Dr. Schultz in the wake of the Wolseley expedition, arriving in Winnipeg on September 4, 1870. He purchased what was left of the *Nor'Wester* press at auction, and the following week issued the first number of the *Manitoba*

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3. The first poem known to have been composed in western Canada was Pierre Falcon's song of victory "Chanson de la Grenouillère", inspired by the Battle of Seven Oaks in June, 1816. This passed by word of mouth until it became a Métis folk ballad. It was probably not written down until about 1870.

4. *See* the Canadian North-West Historical Society's publication *The Story of the Press*. *See also* D. C. McMurtrie's "The first printing in Manitoba", in *Printing Review of Canada* (October, 1930).

News-Letter. The newspaper apparently supported the views and political aspirations of Dr. Schultz. In July, 1871, Laurie sold the paper to a company which began publishing the *Manitoba Liberal*. He worked for some time on another paper, the *Manitoban*, and later was in charge of the job-printing department of the *Manitoba Free Press*. In this position he acted as Queen's Printer for Manitoba. Alexander Begg describes him as Winnipeg's first bookbinder.

In 1878, when the capital of the North-West Territories was established at Battleford, Laurie shipped a press and type by ox cart six hundred miles across the prairie to the new town on the Saskatchewan. At Battleford he established the *Saskatchewan Herald*, the first newspaper published between Winnipeg and the Rockies. He became the first Queen's Printer for the Territories, in which capacity he published the first ordinances. In addition, Laurie had the honour in 1883 of publishing the first book printed in the Territories. This was *The Battle River Valley*, written by his son William with a view to encouraging settlement in the area.

P. G. Laurie died at Battleford in 1903.

This facsimile edition has been prepared from the only copy of Major's poem known to have survived. The original pamphlet is preserved in the library of the Public Archives of Canada, in Ottawa.

Bruce Peel.

University of Alberta, Edmonton,
December, 1952.

THE

RED RIVER EXPEDITION.

By J C. Major

J. C. Major

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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA:
PRINTED BY P. G. LAURIE, "NEWS-LETTER OFFICE."
1870

Wishing from the Author.
20th July 1872.

THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION.

PROLOGUE.

Hope fills my heart, and will,
'Till ev'ry pulse that throbs, in death is still.
So changing scenes will pass, until the last
Of our short drama mingles in the past.
We cannot see, or know the change to be,
In the dark vista of futurity.
Thus, while we live, the rain and sunshine fall,
In fair proportion on the breathing all.
When we consider all the streams that flow,
Of human lifetimes, as they come and go,
Flooding, then ebbing, ending in the same
Relentless grasp of Death, whose very claim
We cannot for a single moment shun,
But pay his tribute each and ev'ry one.
Some leave behind a mark of "how they ran,"
A footprint to the family of man,
While changing lives like mine, ah! who can
say
The good or evil of its transient day.
It matters not—I'll even write the while,
These quiet hours passing, to beguile,
Relate a tale of truth, (without a fiction,)
Of this Red River Expedition.

Brave hearts are gather'd to the call,
Strong arms are pressing round our flag,
T'avenge a murder'd martyr's fall,
Nor leave it e'en when 'tis a rag.

We think not of the toilsome road,
  We heed not now the summer's sun,
Our backs are straighten'd for the load,
  Nor turn we 'till our end is won.

Old Thunder Bay has never seen,
  'Like gathering to this before,
Nor heard a bugle's sound, I ween,
  In all its many years of yore.

Sons of Canada's rich frought land,
  Are listing on this Sabbath morn,
Of Him who holds within his hand,
  The finale of life's ev'ry storm.

The 60th R's, and Royal A's.
  Are bending to the utter'd pray'r,
Oh! grant that He may shew the way,
  And leave His hallow'd blessing there.

The guns that face me, e'en might tell,
  Perchance where human blood was shed,
Where many a gallant foeman fell,
  And wove the last eternal thread.

I care not yet, to leave the world,
  Whate'er misfortune may be mine,
My canvass will, I trust, be furl'd,
  In distant years, some future time.

For he who harbors vain regret,
  Is but a coward at the best,
'Tis useless to repine, or fret,
  When we are gifted for the test.

Soft on the morning air is heard,
  The swelling sound of music's strain,
And voices rise with one accord,
  Then silence reigns supreme again.

A moment of hushed quiet, then,
The Benediction's grand appeal,
Pours out for all those stalwart men.
How few its sublime pathos feel.

Then the command of, wheel or march,
The regular time-measured tramp,
Column by column they advance,
And turn their steps towards the camp.

Woods, lake, and rock, shine in the light,
Enhanc'd by pageantry of war,
But ev'ning gives a pleasant sight,
Unprecedented here before.

For groups get gather'd round the rock,
Music re-echoes o'er the bay,
Soldiers, civilians, hither flock,
In crowds to hear the Rifles play.

The groups of officers together,
Talk where they stand of what they list,
While all enjoy the pleasant weather,
Exchanging many a hearty jest.

And then we get the frothing ale,
From out the primitive canteen;
Oh ! turn not, virtuous reader, pale,
We'd get where we could not be seen.

There we enjoyed the brimming cup,
Talk'd of old times, old scenes now lost,
(Tho' in our mem'ries treasured up),
Until the sound of the "first post."

Then to the camps we'd all disperse,
Each on our "virtuous couches" lie,
For beer but made us little worse,
Than in the morning, rather dry.

And here beneath a tent we'll set,
Where I compose this puerile lay.
The scene is chang'd; while I regret
The happy times in Thunder Bay.

CANTO.

Though 'neath these far Canadian skies,
Old England's well known banner flies,
So Manitoba soon shall see
It waving, where was wont to be
A flag dishonored by its cause,
The disrespect to human laws—
The base abuse of which, if true,
Were worthy of the parvenu,
Who sought by show, or transient might,
To lead the darkened to the light,
Though his own soul, if justly view'd,
Could never be so misconstrued,
As to suppose a lying part
Could homage win of loyal hearts.
There never was a place I've seen,
Never a clime or country been,
'Midst nations, languages or tongue,
That I have chanc'd to mix among,
But He who made yon setting light
Has ever sided with the right.
So 'twill be here, I plainly feel it,
While the result of time will seal it.
The week-days pass so quickly here,
A gen'rous wholesome atmosphere,
The road is clear'd with soldiers' aid,
And lofty trees are lowly laid.
Rafts too are tow'd from creeks, to where
An armed guard keeps sentry, there.
Varied, and changing is the scene,

The building of a magazine,
The rolling casks and stores on shore,
While emptied scow returns for more.
For in the bay the steamer lies,
Her hold full of miscellanies.
(If so the term I may but use,
Nor Lennie's stricter course abuse,
For grammar is a thing I trow,
I slightly heed, and little know
More than sufficient for the time,
Not parse each sentence, or each line.)
Each week there's one, what anxious eyes,
Look round the broken boundaries,
To see if the "Chicora's" coming,
Or the "Algoma" in the offing,
Till nearer and still nearer grows
The outlin'd form, more plainly shews,
Until the gazer sees the name
By which I hand them each to fame.
The "Arctic" too, and others, then
At times come in with stores and men.
All else to excite our feelings fail,
Save only those that bring the mail,
These too will well remembered be,
Thro' many a man's long history,
And p'rhaps relate from sire to son,
The story of an object won,
A country with internal strife,
Quell'd; quieted without a life
Lost to the world save one and he,
Perchance throughout the history,
Of this new nation may have been
The instrument of God; I ween
For purposes, in wisdom done.
Though one, has died and only one,
We can't forget the course he ran,
And left us but a murder'd man.

Work we each day and work we well,
The forest round, its tale will tell.
And roads are cut from Thunder Bay,
Full six and forty miles away,
To where the running Matawin,
Ebbs from the Lake Shebandowan.
Brigades of boats are leaving fast,
We, one and all, wish for the last
One going by the route,
Which now is fixed beyond dispute,
Round by Fort William's river, where,
On that long Kaministiquia,
In retrospection some recall,
The splendid Kakabeka Fall.
I can't describe the glittering spray.
The sheen and brightness of their play,
The steep high rocks, the woods around
Which never echoed to the sound
Of scenes like this; so cannot pen,
The image drawn by other men;
Since then I've often seen, the large
Long rapids in their discharge,
On other lakes while on the way,
To where I now intend to stay.
And speak from heart when I decide,
To let my future lifetime glide
In this far land, if I can rest
Upon the confines of the West.
Oh! for some news from those that live,
Within our mem'ries sacred store,
Where burning untold thoughts are hid
Until our present lives are o'er,
Until the long last final peal,
Shall every secret thought reveal.

Hearts that are strangers to the key,
Of Nature's gentle touching hand,
That traverse ev'ry stretch of sea,

Or visit ev'ry distant land,
That have no thought in all their day,
But passing precious time away.

That have no thought for ought but self,
Who never did one kindly deed,
Such I have known ; but God forgive
The ones that sowed the early seed ;
To me whate'er I may become,
Are dear the days forever gone.

In ev'ry clime 't has been my lot,
To wander o'er our planet's face,
While here my senses take their fill,
Of many scenes my mind can trace,
And now, my advent in the West,
Will here be numbered with the rest.

The bay's calm water like a sheet,
Meets the long point of Thunder Cape,
Whilst islands in the distance ope,
Their offing to a narrow gape,
The hills glow in the golden light
That soon will vanish in the night.

So time flies on, till May is nearly gone,
Sunk in the abyss of Eternal Time,
And each successive day, that duly comes,
It is the same old, old routine,
For 'tis no use to start unless
We're ready for the wilderness.

I've felt alone while in the crowded street,
And here I often think upon the past,
For retrospection brings a sad regret,
While hope oft whispers, that this will not last,
So let the time pass on ; e'en as 't will,
My soul's bright eye is wakeful still.

The sun shines on our flags, dark crimson red,
The band peals out some well remember'd strain,
The liquid surface on it's sandy bed,
Reflects the sheen of yon bright orb again,
And leaflets stirring in the wind,
Bring treasur'd visions to my mind.

England, thy strength is where no power on earth
Can wrest it from thy adamantine hold;
The honor'd title that we claim by birth,
Could ne'er by filthy wealth be bought or sold
And wheresoe'er thy sons may be.
They'll shed their last red drop for thee.

CANTO.

The evening shadows linger, and the soft warm vesper breeze
Stirs now and then the leaflets on the tops of forest trees;.
The lake is scarcely ruffled by a passing breath of wind,
But lies in all its beauty, with the many hills behind,
While down the bay full half a mile the volunteers are seen.
With their tents of snowy whiteness pitch'd near against the green
Of forest trees around, while close by me are standing,
The Expedition pow'rs that are of this Prince Arthur Landing.

There's Wolsley's well known profile, McNeil's
and Huyshe's too,
Irvine, Bolton, Jarvis, tho' I can name but
few,
Whilst Dawson's features in relief clearly (as
if by chance)
Are seen, with his peculiar step and strange-
ly piercing glance.
So many other satellites revolve around the
suns,
Who may some day increase their light un-
til they're equal ones.

Days of fine sunny weather pass,
And then a change; over yon arch'd vault,
Dark gloomy clouds electrified discharge,
Their gleaming fires, while deaf'ning peals
Of thunder shake the very ground,
While yonder lake, so calm, and so serenic
But a few hours ago, is warring with
The blasts of furious howling wind;
Rain in descending torrents wets the earth,
And camp-fires smoke no more;
Breaker on breaker rears and roars
Its anger on the rocky beach,
Resurging like the waves of ocean,
But alas, 'tis but a miniature semblance
Of the mighty deep.
Night throws her shadows o'er the scene;
The warring elements abate not in their fury,
So rightly is this designated Thunder Bay,
For hidden veins of metal lie, perchance,
Beneath yon rising hills, and thus attract
The combatants of air;
Morning, grey, dull and cold
For summer-time; a higher sea,
(Or higher lake, howe'er you like

The term I use;) and boats
Break from their moorings; on the
Beach are thrown like nothings,
Till the hands of but a few,
('Mong whom an officer or two are seen,)
Drag them from out the surf,
Lest they should break, and useless be
For ever after.
Night comes again, till near its noon
There is a sullen roar along the beach,
While clouds disperse, and so
I lay me down, tired and weary
Sleep, until the rays of Sol
Wake me once more to pleasant weather,
And a sunny day.

Wing on old time, wing on your way,
I wish not longer here to stay;
Let us float on the ebbing stream;
This life of sameness is no theme
To talk about so long I trow:
To other places I will go,
And see what they are doing there;
For boats are getting scarcer here,
And men as well; the staff has gone;
While though but few, we're near alone.
With palm in hand each morn I hail.
The intricacies of a sail.
But I must leave, at last, by road
And get a ride upon a load
Of sundries, drawn by horses two;
Though night comes on before I view
The tents against the trees afar
On the river of Oskondogan;
Leave it, and perhaps at nine at night.
Arrive at camp on the Dam Site:
While there I did resolve to see

Fort Garry, with its vast prairie.
Next morn, I left the camp behind,
And even now I call to mind,
The way the noisy river ran,
From out the Lake Shebandowan,
The rapids were but trifles to
The ones we recently ran through.
But here I am again, and learn,
That I must 'even now return,
Nor thus digress such lengthy spans,
But start me from Shebandowan,
And tell you what we did accrue,
This weary lengthy journey through.
Knowledge—you'll say, oh, guessing sage,
We learn'd to traverse a portage.
The busy scene occurs each day,
Brigades are hastening away,
And as the mind embraces it,
'The reign of Chaos' seems to fit.
Day after day, fresh boats are gone,
At latest eve, or early morn,
All seem elated as they go,
With 'human nature' feelings shew
They care not what the change may be,
To get from this tame pageantry,
Heed not the future, or the course,
If 'twere for better or for worse;
It was a summer's evening bright,
As ever fell to human sight
Or could be wish'd by mortal man
When we left the Shebandowan.
I mean Cook's company; the first,
Perhaps the best, but not the worst,
Of all Ontario's stalwart forms,
That England's regiments now adorn.
Though not all men like Harry Lee,
Can boast of more than six feet three,

But only state that perhaps they might,
Behave when in the smoking fight,
Not them alone, but even all,
Here that may know a bugle's call,
Shew that the self same metal runs,
In all of Albion's distant sons,
As in the days, now in the shade
The first or e'en the last crusade.
A gentle breeze the loading o'er,
Blows gently from the other shore
So now we 'll leave and onward go,
In our allotted stations so
As to avoid confusing line,
Or to preserve a discipline—
Fresher, still fresher breezes blow,
We round the point with sheets that flow,
And oh ! methought if on the sea,
With noble ship, how it would be,
For often in the pressing gale,
I 've furl'd or made or shorten'd sail,
The sun had sunk, receding light,
Was clasp'd within the arms of night,
And we did land, within a bay,
To camp until the break of day.
Ten minutes pass, and you will see,
Fires that blaz'd right merrily,
Camp kettles fill'd, from out the Lake,
And so content our suppers take,
While laugh and jest I need not say,
Are given in the usual way
With merry taunt, in cheery sound,
That takes away one half the wound,
For words oft spoken in a jest
Are apt to hurt full many a breast ;
Heedless of all they play their part ;
'I were worthy of a painter's art,
To see the feature group'd together,

Some fair ; some bronz'd by other weather,
By Ind's too well remember'd heat,
Or old Atlantic's blinding sleet,
Who e'en might of the Crimea tell,
Or what in later times befell,
Talk too of scenes that they did know,
The siege of Delhi—or Lucknow,
Such there were there, yet now they stand,
In this far distant western land ;
Whilst others have their sails unfurl'd,
To try their advent in the world ;
God grant their voyages may be
But happy ones to memory.
The supper o'er we lay us down,
Upon the nearest softest ground,
And sleep as tired mortals can,
When Morpheus steeps the soul of man,
When tired frame o'ercomes the mind,
Leaving the lagging thoughts behind ;
So night retreats 'fore day again,
That breaks with wind and heavy rain,
But, as the sun rose higher through
The vault of God's ethereal blue,
The gleams bath'd all, while lake and tree,
Hung, as if in imagery,
Some fairy legend did unfold,
The scenes oft in our childhood told,
So Sol once more asserts his sway,
And rules supremely through the day.
We leave the bay, what beauty there—
Pellucid water—balmy air,
Green waving trees—dark rocks—whose gloom,
Were worthy of a hermit's tomb—
Diversified by islands green,
That shine beneath the glorious sheen,
Of that 'great light' that wondrous orb
Where speculation may absorb

Where science now, so earnestly,
Tasks all to learn its mystery,
The secrets of the fiery coat,
That's tarnish'd only by the blot,
Of tracts that seem (without comment)
Consum'd by its own element;
While now if I extend the dream,
It were a never ending theme,
But here my memory recalls,
The first of Kashibowe's falls.
We hear the sound of rushing water,
"Niagara" p'rhaps in miniature,
But soon beneath the trees is seen,
The falling of the rapid stream.
The spray in crystal globules send,
Their bright reflection, at the bend
As where the river meets the lake;
And where we lie; we quickly make
Our preparations, to empty all
The boats together, near the fall.
How barrels roll upon the shore,
I've never seen the like before,
Surrounded by the scenes I've sung,
These puerile sentences among.
The portage measur'd o'er a mile;
It must be done; and thus the while,
With lengthen'd faces so we ponder
Gazing at first in stupid wonder;
But thought wakes up, from out its rest
Whilst plans are form'd to cross it best;
To carry flour, beans and pork
Is tiresome and heavy work,
Cartridge and armchests, boats and tents,
Give rise to many arguments,
But what's the use of grumbling o'er,
What we have never done before?
So buckle to it as we may,

And leave old time to clear the way;
They did; with heavy sweating brows
My retrospection sees them now.
Still jokes, and louder laughter rang
Those old re-echoing woods among
While fervent utter'd blessings fell
On "carts" that shook our nerves so well.
Time on his journey moves, and youth
Will change into old age in truth,
(Scenes that we now may ponder on
Will sink into oblivion;
And men and things will change, and I,
Shall live my time; and then shall die
While sights and countries I have seen,
Many will never know t' have been;
Perchance my grave may never claim.
A mark to tell my death and name,
But in my heart there is a gem
That breathes a fuller "resurgem"
So if the heaving billows roll,
Along their stretch from pole to pole,
If down—deep down—my body lies.
Beneath those liquid boundaries,
Or if the sod from which I came,
A thing—a being—then a name,
Breathing the very breath of God,
Thro' time's eternal period.
That thought will give my spirit ease,
Whether on land, or stretching seas,
Though if a higher pow'r does deem,
Me right in ending here life's dream,
So I will, live, and living—die
In this far Western Terr'tory.)

The hour of ten had past and gone,
Our foremost portage, fought and won -
Thought with disgust of "what's in store,"

And how many there would be more—
Thus four we cross'd ; when, it is true,
We to it more accustom'd grew.
Nor car'd at all what other's were,
We'd face them manfully when there,
With greater ease than at the first,
The two of all by far the worst.
The Height of Land we see at last,
Four of weary trials past,
Two called Kash-i-bowe,
And two I think are term'd Brule,
So we'll go on with better will
Cross we the two they term Baril.
Leave scenes so very much the same,
Giving them each a proper name,
For well they will remember'd be,
At least in our imagery.
So from Brule, for thus they ran,
There's three of Windigostigan,
While further on our pilgrimage,
We come upon the French portage,
Which pass'd ; a stream that ends with rock
Leads 'cross to Kaogasikok.
If then, with fewer words we'll take
A trip across old Sturgeon Lake.
Beautiful falls I can't forget,
The finest we have come to yet,
Tanner's and Island portage past,
We come to Neguagon at last
Thence to Bare portage—the last one
Ere Rainy Lake we gaze upon
So for to night I'll rest my pen,
And sleep the same as other men.

Blow, breezes blow,
Our course lies on
Blow fresh and strong,

That we may sail
Before thy gale,
Nor work us so,
Let oars rest inboard for awhile,
Let pleasant chat the time beguile,
Let anecdotes or " yarns be spun."
As o'er thy waves we glide along.

But direct fate,
Ordains it not,
Such is our lot,
For adverse breeze.
Give's us no ease.
Insatiate,
With stern revenge, blows right ahead
So we get safely harbor-ed
For fortune favors us at best,
By giving us a daytime's rest,

Old Boreas fails,
Or rests a time
Then in a line
Our boats proceed,
'Tis well indeed,
Each foot curtails
The lengthy road, that we do wend,
Whilst every blade, with springing bend,
Dips in the water—bright and clear,
Bringing us nearer and more near.

The Rainy River
I now can see,
In my mind's eye,
We reach'd its source,
Where on its course,
It flows through Lac des Bois, fine sheet,
Which in its ownard route does meet,

The waters where Fort Garry lies,
On Winnipeg's far boundaries.

Oh ! that some better bard than I would write,
A strain more full to thee—more erudite—
Two rapids at thy head, we run and glide,
More slowly pass the scen'ry of thy sides ;
Fort Francis lies near Rainy River's head,
A pallisade—houses a few—and sheds,
While Rainy Falls dash o'er the rocky height
A thousand rainbows on the gazer's sight.

Thy green and sloping banks, thy winding way
Thy still dark waters, where the sunbeams play,
And purple fruit hang in thy verdant woods
Ripe, rich and luscious for a mortal's food.
Where Nature seems t'have done man's work in part
And lawns are shapen, as by human art,
Where gardens lie—scatter'd with careless hood
For all her children whense'e'er they need.

Such are thy scenes, oh ! Rainy River—when
I pass'd thy borders one clear day ; and then
Methought of bygone tropic scenes as well,
As far exceeding as they can excel,
In glorious beauty, where the broad leav'd trees,
With fire-flies dancing and the vesper breeze,
Blows murm'ring while the forest Kingdom [waves,
A gentle requiem to the daylight's grave.

Still for a quiet scene, a rural rest,
Thy banks to me may vie—e'en with the best,
For varied green, and calm serenic peace,
Where one might almost wish to "be at ease"
No crowning height, no frowning deep ravine,
Is by the pleasant borders to be seen,

No marked-ed change—yet 'tis a lovely sight—
A pretty picture—in a brilliant light—

We'll leave thee now. Pine Portage greets our eye
Tall noble trees are waving there before,
And starry gems in heaven's canopy
Are gleaming on its near and farther shore,
The breeze blows fair, oh ! grant it may retain,
One breath of luck to waft us o'er the main—
Of Lac des Bois vast inland liquid sheet,
And favor'd breezes may our wishes meet.

Good faith! the breeze blows well; spread wings and run,
Let us not mar th'excitement of the race,
No unskill'd hand shall guide our good boat on,
So let the fleetest follow us in chase.
Crowd on your canvass ! crowd, and trim it well,
'Tis here that all the seamanship will tell,
'Tis here the yatcht'smen, amateurs in part,
Will shew their knowledge of a seaman's art.

And stronger yet the airy fluid blows
We guide her where the breezes blow the best,
So ; speeding fast our little vessel goes,
Leaving behind so many of the rest,
Whilst on our beam but one of them I see,
That keeps her way beside us on the lee.
She too before the close of day did learn,
The shape and color of her rival's stern.

The dull dark clouds betoken'd wind or rain,
Still on we kept nor slacken'd ought our pace,
'Till night's dark advent, "brought us to" again,
Ending the while, our emulative race,
And camp fires burn'd, and jokes were quickly sent,
Amongst each other in our merriment

Never heard there in all the years, now fled,
On times' recording pages number'ed.

Scarce had the daylight broke, and morning light
Grew to the fulness of a summer's day—
We found our wind had vanish'd in the night,
And oars betask'd us for a weary way;
Reach'd we an island; camp'd under its lee,
'Till more advantageous the breeze should be,
So here I'll leave imagery to beg,
And come at once into the Winnipeg.

Rat Portage, I can picture thee now
Though I will give thee only a line
'Dallas' we'll pass with a souvenance,
The "Grand Decharge" will hasten the time.

Yellow Mud now recedes from my view,
Remembrance here will linger apace,
Islington Mission greets my view,
Its rural outlines my mind can trace.

Island Portage or Portage de l'Isle,
Passes by in a beautiful dream,
Chute a Jacques, its tortuous way,
Swift silent tide, and picturesque stream.

Point de Bois and next the "Slave Falls,"
Glorious! rushing their course along.
Eddies whirl round their rocky beds,
Unconquer'd current shallow and strong.

Trees that shade o'er its rocky banks,
Granite rocks on each side of my hand,
Resting there in their silent sleep,
Thousands of years in that sterile land,

The " Otter Fall " with a noble swell,
Comes then in a visionary dream,
The swelling tide where the waters meet,
Into a still and silent stream.

Never a thought till the rushing tide
Frothing and seething, hissing along,
All thy surroundings full justice do
Unto thy waters so deep and strong.

Then comes the vilest, smallest of all,
Seven following close in a line,
So onward we speed, and quickly cross
Within a few fleeting hours of time.

Then Bonnet Lake, but we will not wait
The " White Mud " too we will pass in haste,
Come to the ones so rightfully named
The Silver Falls, on the rock bound waste.

Oh, " Silver Falls," yea, silver indeed,
Thy bosom is all a shining white,
Whilst sunbeams dancing thy crests upon,
Do almost dazzle the orbs of sight.

No boat could live in thy treach'rous foam
Beautiful only unto the eye,
Rearing, and roaring, dashing along,
With this last tribute I pass thee bye.

Pine Portage, I'll but mention thy name
For well I remind me what thou wert,
Our journey is short'ning fast you'll say,
For yonder stands Alexander Fort.

The old flag floated where we landed
Over us high the platform above,

The steps that lead to it I traverse,
Thinking the while, how a man will rove.

Over the seas, farther and farther,
Visiting every country known—
A feeling oft comes o'er us sadly,
Think we of how we travel alone.

Early morning and we have started
Favoring wind as our course we take,
O'er the breast of the dirty water
Geography calls the Winnipeg Lake.

On we hasten for the long Red River,
Now we will enter its reeded mouth,
The sands are past; while there we see it,
Running its way, nearly North and South.

Here will I rest me at breakfast time,
After it on my journey proceed,
Bid ye fare well for a short half hour,
And alter my strain, as it may need.

Fall autumn leaves thy day has come,
So we shall fade like thee ;
The morn, the noon of life may pass,
And old age we may see ;
But fruits will drop ere they are ripe,
A storm may cross the path,
And many a tree does fall before
The fury of its wrath.
Thus we as well might close our day,
Ere twelve short months have pass'd away.

Such thought will sometimes visit us,
When others may but jest,
Yet I must guilty plead for one,

T' have felt it with the rest.
For thus I thought while I did float,
Upor the sluggish stream,
And call'd the past unto my mind,
In retrospection's dream.
Have ye ne'er had a dream like this
And felt that something was amiss ?

I will not dwell upon it more,
I'll watch me where we go,
As by the river banks we glide,
With measur'd stroke and slow.
The oars dip in ; the liquid flood,
Its sound to me is old,
And trees of varied foliage shine,
As if their leaves were gold.
But yet no houses grace the side
Of the Red River's ebbing tide.

So on, and on our good boat goes—
I would the tale were done,
Till near the " Lower Fort" and met
The Sixtieth on return,
And cordial greetings pass'd to all,
And wishes there were said,
Of good import from ev'ry lip,
By shouts accompanied.
While all the plunder they had there,
Was a contented looking bear.

The sun had sunk behind the hill
When our feet touch'd the shore,
And walked around the Lower Fort,
And scanned it o'er and o'er,
We long'd to start the twenty miles,
On which Fort Garry lies,
To gaze upon its sim'lar walls

And end our miseries.
But patience, ere another sun
Our tedious journey will be done.

Houses of varied structure now,
And churches grace the view ;
I cannot now recall the names,
Of settlements pass'd through,
Nor does it matter much I trow,
But I will call to mind,
St. Andrew's church and kerchiefs white,
That flutter'd in the wind,
The merry shouts, for none but boys,
Could make so jubilant a noise.

God speed the time, the wind blows fair,
Our little fleet hies on,
And at the hour of five we find
Our weary race is run.
For yonder runs the Assiniboine,
And there Fort Garry lies,
The emblem of our nation's might
Floats out against the skies—
No booming gun, no battle cry,
'Tis ended all and peacefully.

And now I'll close my rambling lay,
It may not please you all,
For many a hawkeyed critic may,
Some minor fault or small,
Point to the gaze of public view.
But take it as 'twas meant,
'Twas done in friendship for you all
And not with bad intent,
While my last wishes you will see
Conclude this condens'd history.

CONCLUSION.

My journey now is ended quite, the weary task is done,
I would that I could write me of a battle yet unwon,
But ere I lay me down the pen, a boon I simply crave,
A thought once in a lifetime, and a thought beyond the grave,
I cannot tell of scenes gone bye, recalling all the past,
The dream was far too peaceful, yet methought that it would last,
I would if I could dip my pen in streams of liquid fire,
But write the words my soul doth feel, expressing its desire.
I'd wish well to my fellow men, wherever I might be,
That they might live with one accord, in peace and unity.
Contrast at times [redacted] we do, as time pursues his way,
The sunshine of the buried past; the gloominess to day,
But life's dark trials are but sent, it is my firm belief,
To purify our mind's and shew their bright sides in relief,
I cannot think of by gone scenes without a grateful heart,
I cannot bring my mind so low, and act a lying part.
But I do write that which I feel, no matter what I am,
Nor do I "better claim to be" than any other man,
Or any fellow creature that it here has been my lot,
To have meant within these pages; nor have I e'er forgot,
The subordinate position to which my time was lent;
And if a pleasant thought I've giv'n my mind is well content—
You know me all; you know me well, such as I seem to be,
For passing jests, and pleasant words, will dwell in memory—
But deeper thoughts of other scenes, far far away from these,
Recall'd in visionary dreams, and treasur'd o'er the seas,
Thought of when all the world's fair gems have fail'd the sick'ning soul,
In ev'ry zone, in ev'ry clime, I've cherish'd them withal
And I would never now retrace the race that I have ran,
I feel that it is for the best, for "life is but a span"

That steps from here and treads a far--where none of
us can tell--
But this we know the soul we breathe, has no funeral
knell.
I could recall so many scenes, in Ind's far distant east,
I could sit down and talk a while to give the mind a feast,
Could tell of antique wonders and of strange existing
things
While these reminiscences with'al their own sweet
comfort brings,
But never has it been my lot to go a route like this,
Or mingle in such novel scenes, in such a wilderness,
And I do thank ye, one and all, for ev'ry kindly word,
For characters of men will shew e'en in a thoughtless
word.
I cannot speak ought ill of one in all Ontario's Corps,
And wish them ev'ry happiness through all the days
before.
It may not be that we should meet again, upon the
earth,
But keep within your inward souls the land that gave
ye birth,
No matter wheresoe'er it is, of large or small extent,
The land that bore our fore'athers is ours to all intent,
We cannot cut the bond in two the truer blood will
shew,
Remember this I pray ye all, wherever you may go,
And now good-bye, one hearty grasp, for spring will
scatter all
Your ranks that I've oft look'd upon, before th'en-
suing fall,
God speed ye too, and all I ask is what I ask'd before,
"A thought at times," 'twill ne'er o'erload your me-
mories, vast store,
And ev'ry officer as well my earnest wishes hath
Prosperity and happiness, may alway cross their path.
While if I have by my poor pen beguil'd the time awhile
'Twere not in vain to try again, a more elab'rate style.
So one last wish I will propose, which ev'ry one will join,
The sterling of a metal's worth will ring throughout
the coin,
As men beneath the Crimson flag, whatever may betide,
In peace or war, within the ranks of God's avenging side,
Ring ye the war-cry long and loud, the battle shout
supreme,
God's blessing on our nation's arms, and on our noble
Queen.